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General Assembly
Sixty-seventh session

Official Records

74th plenary meeting
Friday, 26 April 2013, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Jeremić ..... (Serbia)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Kanda (Ghana), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.35 a.m.

Agenda item 134 (*continued*)

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (A/67/693/Add.10)

The Acting President: I should like, in keeping with established practice, to draw the attention of the General Assembly to document A/67/693/Add.10, in which the Secretary-General informs the President of the General Assembly that, since the issuance of his communication contained in document A/67/693/Add.9, the Dominican Republic and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela have made the payments necessary to reduce their arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the United Nations Charter. May I take it that the General Assembly takes due note of the information contained in this document?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 111 (*continued*)

Appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments

(f) Appointment of members of the Committee on Conferences

Note by the Secretary-General (A/67/107)

The Acting President: Members will recall that at its 62nd plenary meeting, on 21 December 2012, the Assembly took note of the appointment of Côte d'Ivoire and Senegal as members of the Committee on Conferences for a period of three years, beginning on 1 January 2013 and ending on 31 December 2015.

Members will also recall that at its 65th plenary meeting, on 21 February 2013, the Assembly took note of the appointment of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iraq and Israel as members of the Committee on Conferences, for a term of office beginning on 21 February 2013 and ending on 31 December 2015, and Sri Lanka as a member of the Committee on Conferences, for a term of office beginning on 21 February 2013 and ending on 31 December 2014.

Members will further recall that two seats from among the Latin American and Caribbean States, for a term of office beginning on the date of appointment and ending on 31 December 2015, remain vacant.

I should also like to remind members that one seat, also from among the Latin American and Caribbean States, for a term of office beginning on the date of appointment and ending on 31 December 2014 has been vacant since the sixty-sixth session.

On the recommendation of the Chair of the Group of the Latin American and Caribbean States, Peru has been appointed a member of the Committee on Conferences, for a term of office beginning on 26 April 2013 and ending on 31 December 2015.

May I take it that the Assembly takes note of this appointment?

It was so decided.

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The Acting President: Regarding the remaining vacant seats from among the Latin American and Caribbean States, consultations will continue with that regional group.

The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of sub-item (f) of agenda item 111.

Agenda item 33

Prevention of armed conflict

Draft resolution (A/67/L.61)

The Acting President: Before proceeding further, I would like to inform members that the debate on agenda item 33 will take place at a later date to be announced.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to introduce draft resolution A/67/L.61.

Mr. Gata Mavita wa Lufuta (Democratic Republic of the Congo) (*spoke in French*): I have the distinct honour to introduce, on behalf of the Group of African States, the draft political declaration on the peaceful resolution of conflicts in Africa.

First of all, I take this opportunity to express the African Group's profound gratitude to the President of the General Assembly for this important initiative to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the former Organization of African Unity, now the African Union. I would also like to pay special tribute to Mr. Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, President of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea; Mr. Pierre Buyoya, former President of Burundi, African Union High Representative for Mali and representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission to this meeting; and the Ministers for Foreign Affairs and other eminent personalities who have granted us the honour of participating in this meeting. I would also like to thank all the Member States for their interest in this event and for their participation in the general debate.

I should like to introduce to the Assembly, on behalf of the African Group, draft resolution A/67/L.61, which contains the draft political declaration on the peaceful settlement of conflicts in Africa. The draft resolution commemorates the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the Organization of African Unity/African Union. It also highlights the fact that decolonization was the primary goal behind the establishment of our continental organization. Today as we celebrate this historic opportunity, we welcome the achievements that our continent has made: the transformation of the Organization of African Unity into the African Union; the continent's economic evolution; and the establishment of the Peace and Security Council, as enshrined in the Constitutive Act of the African Union.

We therefore call on all Member States to adopt this draft resolution by consensus, in a show of genuine solidarity with the political and economic transformation of Africa.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take action on draft resolution A/67/L.61, entitled "Political declaration on the peaceful resolution of conflicts in Africa".

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Zhang Saijin (Department of General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, since the submission of the draft resolution, in addition to the delegations listed in document A/67/L.61, the following countries have become sponsors: the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Malaysia, the Russian Federation and Timor-Leste.

The Acting President: May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/67/L.61?

Draft resolution A/67/L.61 was adopted (resolution 67/259).

The Acting President: Before giving the floor to speakers in explanation of position, allow me to remind delegations that explanations are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. DeLaurentis (United States of America): We welcome the adoption of the political declaration (resolution 67/259) commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the Organization of African Unity and commending African Union and international efforts to peacefully resolve African conflicts. We further welcome the positive contributions of the African Union and subregional organizations to the peaceful settlement of disputes in Africa and the continued cooperation and mutual support between the United Nations and the African Union.

We strongly agree with the language celebrating Africa's economic growth throughout the global economic crisis, reaffirming the international community's support for the consolidation of democracy and good governance in Africa, and recognizing that the implementation of peacebuilding and State-building goals will contribute to durable peace and sustainable development in Africa.

We nonetheless have concerns about the process under which the declaration was negotiated and about the language of the declaration in a few areas. We would have welcomed further consultations on the text, beyond the one session that was held, as there remained substantive differences on it. Specifically, the declaration lacks robust provisions on the role of accountability in preventing and deterring conflicts and providing justice for victims. As we have consistently noted, the rule of law and transitional justice are critical in preventing conflict and atrocities and rebuilding societies torn apart by systemic violence. Accountability for the worst atrocities has been and remains an important priority for the United States and is a crucial ingredient to peacefully resolving conflicts in Africa and elsewhere. Additionally, the United States believes that pronouncements on Security Council reform are best left to the intergovernmental negotiations that are working to forge a consensus among members.

We are glad to join the nations assembled here in supporting the ongoing initiatives at the United Nations and the African Union to address the peace and security challenges facing the African continent.

The Acting President: I give the floor to the observer of the European Union.

Mr. Vrailas (European Union): I speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States.

Let me start by emphasizing the importance that the European Union and its member States attach to marking the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the Organization of African Unity. We should indeed pay tribute to the founders of the African Union and mark the key role of the African Union and subregional organizations in settling disputes and conflicts peacefully. We also welcome the initiative of the President of the General Assembly to organize a debate on the matter.

The resolve of Africa to take responsibility for its own peace and security has been strongly supported by the European Union and its member States from the outset. We have provided consistent and substantial political backing and predictable funding to African peace support operations and the relevant capacity-building activities.

The declaration adopted today (resolution 67/259) contains many important elements, which we warmly embrace in view of the strong Africa/EU partnership. We are convinced that we would have been able to give our unqualified support to this text if we had been given an opportunity and sufficient time to engage on its content. The lack of time and consultations does not do justice to the importance of the subject matter, and it does not reflect normal General Assembly working practice.

As it stands, the political declaration does not include agreed language on several important issues we submitted comments on, such as the role of women in conflict resolution, development, human rights, the responsibility to protect, the fight against impunity and the role of the International Criminal Court, and fails to acknowledge that the Security Council has the primary responsibility for international peace and security. Their absence from the political declaration cannot be taken as setting a precedent for future consideration of the same topics.

Regarding the paragraph on Security Council reform, the States members of the European Union wholeheartedly support increased representation for African States within a reformed Security Council. However, we wish to underline that the framework of intergovernmental negotiations was established by the General Assembly as the forum to ensure that the issue is given the full and considered attention it deserves.

The States members of the European Union acknowledge that this declaration represents the views of the members of the Group of African States on this issue. The positions of EU member States on Security Council reform are unchanged and remain as articulated in the framework of the intergovernmental negotiations.

We will continue to stay actively engaged in debates on Africa and with Africa, and to further develop our vibrant Africa-EU partnership on the many issues the General Assembly covers. In that regard, we would like to take this opportunity to appeal to the flexibility of the African Group to allow for the broad participation of non-governmental organizations in the context of

other upcoming high-level meetings, including that on human trafficking.

To conclude, the European Union and its member States remain strong supporters of the positive contribution of the African Union and African subregional organizations to peace on their continent. We will continue to strengthen the global partnership in support of Africa's own efforts and leadership to resolve conflicts and promote durable peace and sustainable development.

Mr. Barriga (Liechtenstein): Liechtenstein and Switzerland join others in congratulating African Member States on the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the Organization of African Unity, the predecessor of today's African Union. Much of Africa's progress today is due to the foresight of the founding fathers of the African Union, and we welcome the continuing and indispensable role of the Union in resolving conflict and promoting peace and security on the African continent. We therefore find it entirely appropriate for the General Assembly to adopt a political declaration on the peaceful resolution of conflicts in Africa (resolution 67/259).

We would also have thought it appropriate, however, for a document of such a nature to be prepared in true consultation with all members of the General Assembly to ensure a balanced outcome that is supported by all. We would have preferred in particular a stronger emphasis on justice, human rights and gender equality as essential pillars of conflict resolution and development. Nevertheless, we are satisfied that the declaration just adopted duly celebrates the achievements made by the African people and encourages all of us to work even harder for a prosperous future for Africa.

Mr. Langeland (Norway): Norway welcomes the adoption of the political declaration on the peaceful resolution of conflicts in Africa (resolution 67/259). It is timely to mark the important role played by the Organization of African Unity/African Union over the past 50 years and, not least, the need to further strengthen the cooperation between the African Union and the United Nations.

While supporting the declaration, Norway would have preferred a more inclusive and consultative process in its elaboration. It would have benefited by including language on the important role of women in resolving conflicts and in peacebuilding. Norway would also have preferred including formulations on justice, the rule of law and fighting impunity.

Let me assure the Assembly that Norway supports the declaration.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of position. The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 33.

The meeting rose at 10.55 a.m.